

Dear Chairpersons and Members of the Joint Committee on the Environment:

I write this to urge you to report SB 445 favorably with substitute language that would restrict the sale of puppy mill dogs at pet stores. Based on my experience with puppy mill dogs, I believe there should be a complete ban on their sale, but the legislative task force took the middle ground by recommending the sale of commercially bred dogs if the breeder were licensed by the USDA and didn't have any direct violations of USDA regulations in the past 2 years or indirect violations in the past 3 years. I urge the Committee at least to take the middle ground as well and report a bill with the Task Force recommendations.

I am a trained and experienced animal emergency care volunteer with RedRover, a California-based organization that works with other rescue organizations (HSUS, ASPCA, and AHA, among others) to create temporary emergency shelters throughout the nation for animals who are rescued as a result of criminal seizures or natural disasters.

My first deployment with RedRover was in 2007 to care for dogs rescued from a puppy mill in Maine who had been seized by order of the State Veterinarian. Over 300 dogs were seized, and I helped care for over 200 of them for 10 days. I didn't even see the worst of it because more than 100 dogs in the worst medical condition were kept at another location in isolation from the general population, and because the more than 200 dogs I helped care for were already vetted and bathed by time I arrived.

I spent 9-10 hours each day during those 10 days with those puppy mill dogs, and it was heartbreaking. Many hung out in the back corner of their kennels, shivering with fear when anyone came near. Others growled from fear when anyone passed their kennel. There were spinners, meaning that the dogs continuously ran around in circles in their kennel. Many couldn't be walked because they became panicked when anyone tried to walk them. Many were on medications for their various ailments.

That experience was an eye-opener for me. Puppy mills shouldn't be allowed, and people should not be allowed to make a profit from the sale of neglected and mistreated dogs. I hope that Connecticut does its part to stop this terrible business of puppy mills. At the very least, please report out the recommendations of the Task Force.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Marcia Goodman
7 Arrowood Drive
Cromwell, CT 06416

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